

Robert Bell Baird House  
195 West Center Street  
Willard  
Box Elder County  
Utah

HABS No. UT-89

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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# HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

## ROBERT BELL BAIRD HOUSE

HABS No. UT-89

Location: 195 West Center Street, Willard, Box Elder County, Utah.

Present Owner/  
Occupant: Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm J. Baird.

Present Use: Private residence.

Significance: The Baird House was built by Shadrach Jones between 1880 and 1883 and is possibly the last house to have been built by him. The simple two-story structure is T-shaped in plan, with decorative elements of the Carpenter Gothic style.

### PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

#### A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: ca. 1880.
2. Architect: not known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The Baird house is built on lot 10, Block 11, Plat A, Willard City Survey. The following references to the title of this lot are found in the Box Elder County Recorder's Office, Brigham City, Utah.

County records indicate an incomplete chain of title between the first transfer of lot 10 in 1872 and the recording in 1884 of Robert Bell Baird's deed. According to family history, Robert Bell Baird's father purchased the entire lot 10 between 1872 and 1884. The only son to remain in Willard, Robert Bell built a stone house ca. 1880 and received title to the lot from his father in 1884.

1884 Deed, signed March 24, 1884, filed October 14, 1915, recorded in Book 9, page 35. Robert Bell Baird bought from Ephraim E. Jones, Administrator of the estate of Zepharia Jones, lot 10 for \$450.

1916 Deed, signed May 23, 1916, filed August 10, 1916, recorded in Book 10, page 252. Ann G. Baird bought from Robert Bell Baird lot 10 for \$100.

1922 Deed, signed May 1, 1922, filed May 2, 1922, recorded in Book 19, page 370. Malcolm Baird bought from Henry Bell Baird lot 10 for \$5,500.

4. Builder: Shadrach Jones built this house ca. 1880 after he and Robert Bell Baird had worked on the Logan Temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Logan, Utah. More than ten of the historic structures in Willard were constructed by Jones, including the George Mason House (UT-92), the Shadrach Jones House (UT-86), and the John L. Edwards House (UT-90).
5. Original plans, construction: The Baird family lived in an adobe structure at the east end of the lot. When Robert Bell was married, he and Shadrach Jones began building the stone house after working on the Logan Temple. (Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm Baird, September 6, 1974.)

The blue-gray granite is squared and laid in broken courses. The T-shaped plan has end wall chimneys in the north and south walls. The second-story door, like that of the Mason house, enters on to a small porch. The porch originally ran the length of the west side.

Decorative bargeboards on two of the three gables (the south gable bargeboards are missing) are terminated with pendants at their lower ends. The decorative motif of the bargeboards appears to be that of a musical note, reflecting Baird's musical inclinations. Decorative bargeboards are also found on the three dormer windows of the west side. The first-floor plan is similar to that of the Shadrach Jones House.

6. Alterations and additions: The following alterations have been made to the structure:

The removal of the front porch which appears to have originally run the length of the west side.

The removal of the decorative bargeboards from the south gable.

The replacement of stove heating with a forced hot air system in the early 1950s.

A concrete block addition, housing the present kitchen and bathroom, was constructed in 1951.

B. Historical Context:

Willard, in Box Elder County, Utah, was one of the early settlements founded by Mormon settlers upon a request from Brigham Young. It was originally known as "Willow Creek" in recognition of the steady stream flowing from a steep mountain canyon to the great Salt Lake. Later the town was renamed to honor Willard Richards, an apostle in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. In plan the town

resembles the plat of the "City of Zion" as designed by Mormon leaders before the settlement of the Utah territory. Instead of dispersed farmsteads, as encouraged by federal land acts of the nineteenth century, the Mormons maintained a closely knit village pattern. Important distinguishing characteristics of a Mormon village manifested in Willard are the presence of barns, granaries, corrals and fences in the village proper. The townsite rests on a wide alluvial fan whose fertile soil has supported farms and orchards since the days of the first pioneers in 1851.

An abundance of finely crafted pioneer stone architecture sets Willard apart from most other Mormon villages. This fact was recognized in July of 1974 when a large portion of the town was designated a National Historic District. The ingenuity of the settlers in making such harmonious use of natural stone, quarried from the mountain canyon just east of the townsite, is uniquely demonstrated in a majority of the more than forty historic structures found within the boundaries of the historic district.

Robert Bell Baird worked for various railroads beginning in 1874, first as a section hand, then as a foreman and later as an agent. He was musically inclined and composed and published several hymns which remain well known in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.. He also wrote for and conducted the Willard Brass Band and Orchestra.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Interview: Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm J. Baird, September 6, 1974, Willard, Utah.
2. Secondary sources:

Box Elder County Chapter of the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers. History of Box Elder County. Salt Lake City: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, n.d.

Nicolas, Hannah B., ed. Willard Centennial, 1851-1951. Willard, Utah: Willard Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1951.

State of Utah, Division of State History. "Historic Sites Survey Form: Robert Bell Baird House." Compiled by Teddy Griffith and Lorna Rich, February 1, 1972.

Prepared by: Peter L. Goss  
Architectural Historian  
Graduate School of  
Architecture  
University of Utah  
November, 1974

PART 11. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: simple granite house accentuated by elements of the Carpenter Gothic style.
2. Condition of fabric: excellent.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 31'-0" x 34'-9".
2. Foundations: granite.
3. Walls: granite; kitchen addition, cinder block.
4. Structural system, framing: masonry bearing wall with wood floor and roof system.
5. Porches: west and north porches, 1" x 4" softwood flooring and 1" x 4" beaded ceiling boards. Six simple columns and turned balusters on west porch. Second level of west porch has metal brackets for balusters, but no balustrade exists. North porch has square posts and pilasters with fan brackets. Jigsawn balusters, present in 1985, were not there in 1974.
6. Chimneys: three, stone.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: stile and rail doors with glass lights, each with a transom window.
  - b. Windows and shutters: carved wood lintels and two-over-two-light and one-over-one-light double-hung sash.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: cross gable roof with asphalt shingles.
- b. Cornice, eaves: gables have decorative bargeboards.
- c. Dormers: three steep-roofed gable dormers on the west. The center one has elaborate jigsawn bargeboards.

C. Description of Interior:

- 1. Floor plans: see drawings.
- 2. Stairways: enclosed stairway with wood risers and treads. Solid wood handrail protects the stairwell on the two exposed sides at the second floor.
- 3. Flooring: 1" x 6" softwood boards.
- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: plaster with wood-paneled jambs at each window.
- 5. Doorways and doors: doors have four panels with transom windows.
- 6. Trim: plain wood trim.
- 7. Hardware: surface passage and locksets.
- 8. Lighting: recently installed convenience outlets for floor and table lamps.
- 9. Heating: forced warm air furnace and duct system. Originally, stoves in many rooms.

D. Site:

House faces west. A white picket fence runs along a portion of the property line.

Prepared by: Burtch W. Beall, Jr.  
Project Supervisor  
Graduate School of  
Architecture  
University of Utah  
November, 1974

### III. PROJECT INFORMATION

The State of Utah survey, conducted by the Historic American Buildings Survey, was cosponsored by the National Park Service and the Utah Heritage Foundation and supported by the Utah American Revolution Bicentennial Commission and the Utah State Institute of Fine Arts jointly with the National Endowment for the Arts. All work was recorded under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, during the summer of 1974 at the Historic American Buildings Survey Field Office at the Graduate School of Architecture, University of Utah. The survey team consisted of Burtch W. Beall, Jr., architect (University of Utah), project supervisor; Dr. Peter L. Goss, project historian; student architects Ronnie B. Cullen (Washington State University), Clayton B. Fraser (University of Tennessee), William B. Klein (University of Utah), and Eric V. Ramsing (University of Oregon). Photographs were taken by Louise T. Taft in 1985. The written data were edited by Alison K. Hoagland, HABS Historian, in 1985.